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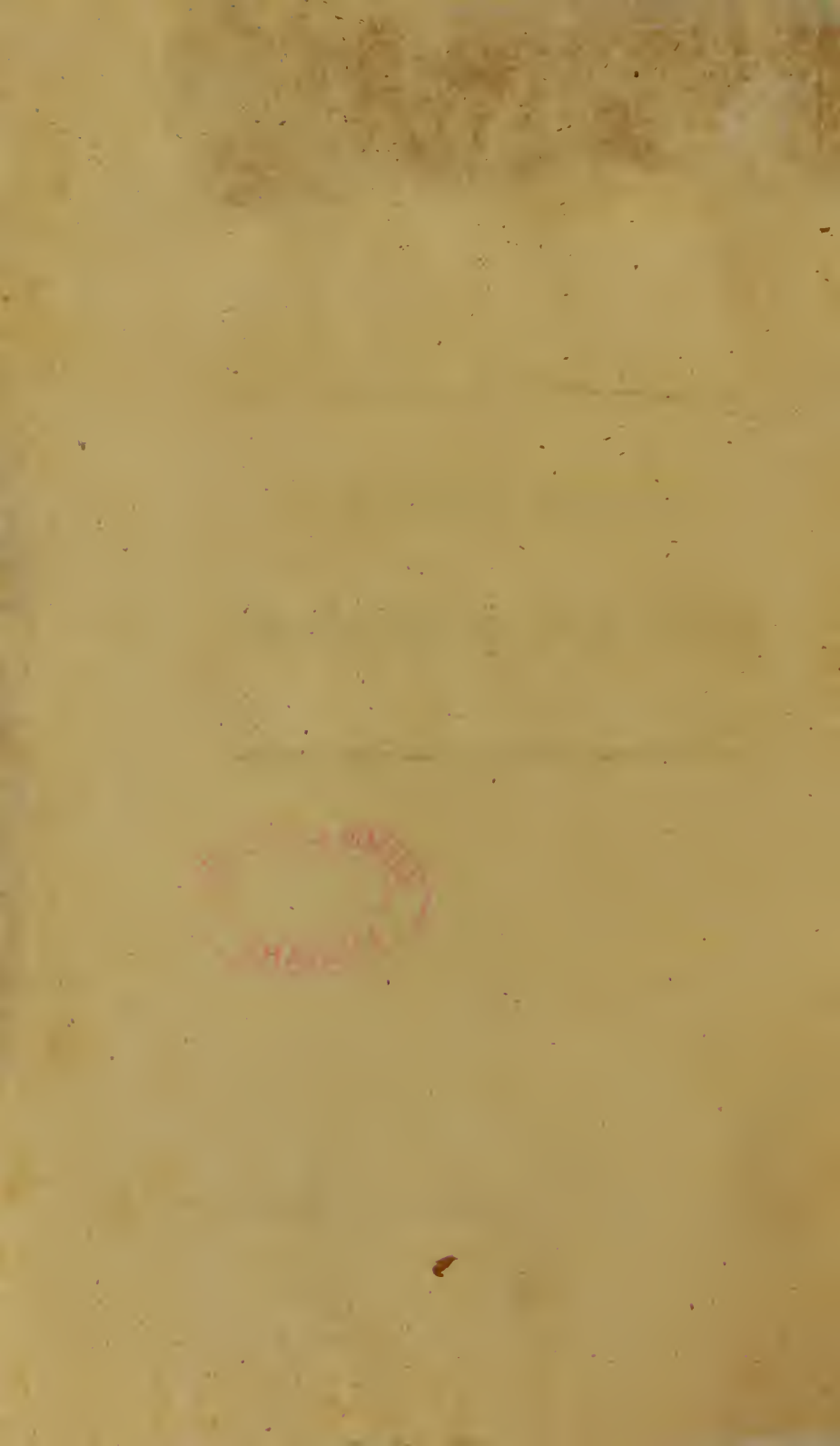
DOCTOR SPALDING'S

Inaugural Address.



John Decon.

Book



DOCTOR SPALDING'S

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED, AT FAIRFIELD, VII DECEMBER, MDCCCXIII.

AT THE

INAUGURATION

OF THE

OFFICERS OF THE COLLEGE

OF

PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS,

OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK,

BY LYMAN SPALDING, M.D.

OF THE CITY OF NEW-YORK ; PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE,
AND PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY AND SURGERY ; CORRESPONDING

MEMBER OF THE LONDON MEDICAL SOCIETY ; HONORARY

FELLOW OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, PRESTON,

ENGLAND ; HONORARY MEMBER OF THE NEW-YORK

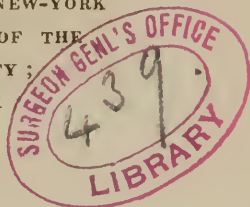
STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY ; FELLOW OF THE

PHILADELPHIA LINNEAN SOCIETY ;

MEMBER OF THE NEW-YORK

HISTORICAL SOCIETY ;

ETC.



NEW-YORK ;

PRINTED BY WILLIAM TREADWELL,
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AN ADDRESS.

“**G**OD created man in his own image,”
“and breathed into his nostrils the breath of
life ; and man became a living soul.” Man’s
first disobedience brought disease into the
world.

Man may therefore be considered in a three
fold view ; as a perfect machine ; as this ma-
chine acted upon by the living principle ; and,
as the machine and living principle under
the influence of disease.

A knowledge of the laws, which govern
the economy of man, in this three-fold state,
constitutes the science of medicine.

The laws, which appertain to man as a mere machine, are easily understood ; but those, which result from the action of the living principle on this machine in health, and while under the influence of disease, are very intricate.

The extreme subtilty, which exists in the connexion of spirit with matter, has much retarded improvement in medicine ; and, although the laws of organic life and of disease are coeval with Adam, and as unchangeable as those of the Medes and Persians ; yet philosophers of all ages have laboured in vain to find them out unto perfection.

Man, as subjected to disease by the fall, may be considered, in a medical view, as the same, from that period to the present. Whence then the varieties in constitution,

and in disease ? They are the effects of climate and civilization.

Where is the judicious physician, who has not observed a difference between the diseases of the north, and those of the south ; of the upland, and of the marsh ; of the town, and of the country ; of the pampered glutton, and of the frugal liver ?

Climate, luxury, idleness, dress, occupation, produce lasting effects upon man, often disposing him to new diseases ; or, at least, disease under a different form ; and even destroying his liability to others. There is, moreover, some unknown cause, which influences the appearance and disappearance of certain diseases.

The healing art cannot be traced to any particular origin. The ancient pagans say,

it was the gift of the gods. When man became afflicted with disease, self-preservation, the first law of nature, taught him to seek relief. His remedies were few and simple, as every man was his own physician. The curing of diseases, however, soon claimed the attention of philosophers. The better to prosecute their enquiries, they assembled in academies, societies, and clubs ; and hence arose the great schools of medicine.

The schools of Athens and Alexandria were the most celebrated among the ancients, as have been those of Leyden and Edinburgh among the moderns. Since the days of Hippocrates, a great physician has seldom been found, who had not been matriculated in one of those seminaries.

In our own country, the schools in Philadelphia and New York dispute the palm of

precedence ; while those in Boston, Hanover, Baltimore, Providence, and Newhaven, are rising in importance.

The first course of lectures,* in this school, was delivered, in the winter of 1808-9, under the auspices of the trustees of Fairfield academy.

The honourable, the legislature of the state of New-York, at their session in 1810, granted to the trustees of this academy the

* These lectures were purely chemical, and were delivered by JOSIAH NOYES, M.D.

In January, 1809, NATHANIEL JACOBS, M.D. delivered an epitome of a course on anatomy.

In December, 1809, doctor NOYES delivered lectures on chemistry, materia medica, and mineralogy ; and doctor JACOBS, on anatomy and surgery.

In November, 1810, doctor NOYES delivered lectures on chemistry, etc. and doctor SPALDING, on anatomy, etc.

In the winter of 1811, lectures were delivered on chemistry, etc. by doctor NOYES ; on anatomy, etc. by doctor SPALDING ; on the institutes and practice of medicine, by doctor GEORGE C. SHATTUCK ; and on obstetrics, by doctor WILLOUGHBY.

In 1812, under the authority of the college, lectures were delivered by doctor SPALDING, on anatomy, etc. and by doctor WILLOUGHBY, on obstetrics.

In 1813, doctor SPALDING on anatomy, etc. and on the

sum of five thousand dollars, for medical purposes.

In reward of the great exertions made by this school, and in consequence of its flourishing condition, the honourable, the regents of the university of the state of New-York, on the 12 of June, 1812, were pleased to incorporate it into a college of physicians and surgeons.* At the same time, the legislature

institutes and practice of medicine ; doctor WILLOUGHBY on obstetrics ; and doctor HADLEY on chemistry, materia medica, and mineralogy.

* This college was located in the town of Fairfield, Herkimer county. Its session commences, annually, on the first tuesday of November, and continues three months.

The officers are

LYMAN SPALDING, M. D. president, and professor of anatomy and surgery ; and lecturer on the institutes and practice of medicine.

WESTEL WILLOUGHBY, jun. M. D. vice president, and professor of obstetrics.

JAMES HADLEY, A. M. professor of chemistry, materia medica, and mineralogy.

WILLIAM D. FORD, esq. treasurer.

Dr. JONATHAN SHERWOOD, register.

The establishment of a professorship of natural philosophy and botany is contemplated.

liberally granted the further sum of ten thousand dollars.*

The first meeting of the trustees was held, on the first of December, 1812 ; and, at that and a subsequent meeting, the college was completely organized.

I cannot but wish, that the presidency of this college had been conferred on one better qualified, and more able to perform the duties of the office.

Such is the zeal for knowledge, in this country, that no man, without having attended several courses of lectures, thinks his medical education complete. Often does the honest physician, grown grey in the practice of his profession, quit his daily

* At the session of 1814, the legislature granted this college the right of subscribing for certain shares in the Utica bank, valued at about 10,000 dollars.

rounds and hang on the lips of the teacher, for the noble purpose of becoming more useful to mankind.

The time is not far distant, when health, one of the most rational pursuits of man, will claim a proper attention, and the enlightened physician, a due reward.

Scientific professors of medicine have ever held a dignified rank in society. APOLLO was enrolled among the gods ; HIPPOCRATES, honoured with a crown of gold ; VESALIUS, a favourite of CHARLES the fifth ; SYDENHAM, the pride of the British Empire ; BOERHAAVE, the glory of the European Continent ; RUSH, the ornament of the American Republic.

To cultivate the science of medicine, to the best advantage, pursue the steps of HIPPOCRATES, of VESALIUS, of SYDENHAM, of BO-

ERHAAVE, of RUSH. They, like BACON, reasoned from effect to cause.

HIPPOCRATES studied under several of the most celebrated philosophers of his time, and was instructed in the liberal arts.

He possessed, in an eminent degree, the great prerequisite to form a physician, a THINKING MIND. He suffered none of the phenomena of nature to pass unobserved; neither was he satisfied with a transient view. To the genius of this great man, the world is indebted for the first hints on the mode of reasoning by induction, which was afterwards established by BACON, LORD VERULAM, to the complete overthrow of the syllogistic jargon of the schools.

HIPPOCRATES always read, with a pen in his hand. He transcribed from the writings of

the ancients every thing relative to his profession. When he became a practitioner, he kept notes of ALL his cases, from which he drew his principles in medicine. “ He was the first man we know of, who laid down precepts concerning physic.”

VESALIUS, after having received the usual education of the age, studied his profession at Montpellier and Paris.

“ His zeal for medicine, particularly anatomy, induced him to brave every danger, to which he was exposed, by clandestinely procuring bodies for dissection. He did not, however, confine his attention to the human subject only, but opened a great number of animals.” In all his disputations, he constantly referred to actual dissections of the human body.

HIPPOCRATES was justly styled the father of medicine ; and VESALIUS, of anatomy.

SYDENHAM was of opinion, that the physician, who should pay the most accurate attention to the symptoms of diseases, and should frequently record their histories, from both of which deducing and establishing methods of cure, would most advance the medical art, and infallibly succeed best in his profession.

BOERHAAVE studied all the fathers of medicine, in the order, in which they wrote ; “yet did he not permit one branch of science to withdraw his attention from others ; anatomy did not withhold him from the prosecution of chemistry, nor chemistry from the study of botany.”

He commenced the practice of physic un-

der pecuniary embarrassments, but firmly resolved that prosperity, if ever he were to enjoy her, “ should be the consequence, not of mean art, nor disingenuous solicitations ; but of real merit and solid learning.”

“ BOERHAAVE’S method of life was to study in the morning and evening, and to allot the middle of the day to his public business. He rose at four in the summer, and five in the winter.” He was never idle, and even, during fits of the gout, he found, by meditating on his studies, that he could effectually divert his attention from the disease.

RUSH was distinguished, at the university, by the brilliancy of his genius. In early life, he established habits of industry and sobriety, which he never abandoned. At the age of 18, he translated from the Greek the aphorisms of his favourite author, HIPPOCRATES.

His countrymen, with pride, trace his footsteps in Edinburgh, London, and Paris.

He rose early, read and reflected much and always made memoranda of all the important phenomena in nature, which came under his view. Often has he stopped gentlemen in the streets, to communicate a new idea, which had just arisen in his mind, fearing it would be forgotten before he had opportunity to commit it to paper.

TO FILL UP THIS OUTLINE ; every gentleman, before he commences the study of medicine, should be well instructed in all the liberal arts and sciences.

As habits of industry and sobriety are indispensable, in travelling the road to eminence, they should early be established; therefore, let the first resolution be, to allot certain hours,

not less than eight in each day, to study. Nothing should be suffered to break in upon this arrangement.

Let him, who thinks this cannot be done, recollect, that while general LEE was retreating before the enemy, at the battle of Monmouth, WASHINGTON, coming up, asked him the cause of his flight. He answered, sir, your troops will not fight British regulars ; the reply was, you never tried them.*

The mind becomes fatigued by long and continued application to one subject ; for this reason, the attention should not be confined to medicine ; but, while studying anatomy, several hours of each day may be devoted to mathematics ; physic may be blended with natural history ; chemistry

* The battle was renewed, and terminated most honourably to the American arms.

may be a companion to philosophy ; and the whole field of polite literature may be reserved for recreation.

Let no physician, when he has received his degrees, think himself possessed of all human science. “ Life is short, the art is long,” says the Coan sage.

When he commences the practice of his profession, let him continue his well established habits of reading, to which must be added meditation.

The favourite object of the practitioner should be his CASE BOOK, in which he must record every disease with all its symptoms, the mode of treatment, and the laws of the animal economy, which are influenced by the disease, and by the cure ; with his own honest reflections. At the same time, he should

read with attention all the best authors, who have written on the subject.

As business increases, the most important cases only need be entered ; but this practice should be continued through life. The appearance of epidemics, and of new diseases, with the influence of climate and season, should be recorded with great fidelity.

The physician should also keep a NOTE BOOK, in which may be entered every important practical idea, whether from reading, conversation, or reflection. If an idea arise, when it can neither be committed to paper nor a friend, he should hold a conversation with himself, and relate all the evidence and arguments on both sides, which will fix the subject firmly in his mind.

After a gentleman has been some time in

business, if an opportunity should offer for visiting other countries and medical schools, he ought to embrace it. Now, like the experienced merchant, he knows what will suit the market. He returns loaded with the wealth of ages, and becomes the pride and ornament of his country.

This is the period of all his glory. Let him HIPPOCRATES-like, reasoning from effect to cause, with his knife and case book in his hand, study to establish principles in medicine. RUSH used to say, one principle is worth a thousand facts.

Look at the great men of all ages ; how have they become eminent ? Not so much from superiority of genius, as from persevering industry.

GALEN travelled from Pergamus to Alexandria, to see a human skeleton.

BOERHAAVE expended every farthing of his patrimony before his collegiate studies were finished, and was obliged to read lectures on mathematics to gain a support.

When FRANKLIN arrived in Philadelphia, his sole fund was "a Dutch dollar, and about a shilling's worth of coppers."

CULLEN and WILLIAM HUNTER "entered into a partnership as surgeons and apothecaries, on condition that, alternately, one should practice the business, while the other might study medicine in whatever university he preferred."

BROWN "submitted in his youth to be a reaper of corn, to procure for himself the means of improvement."

A gentleman now living vested his funds

in books, while attending a medical school, and actually performed a journey of one hundred and thirty miles, at the expence of no more, than thirty seven cents and an half

To be a common-place, plough-jogging, money-getting physician, is, to an ennobled mind, most insufferable.

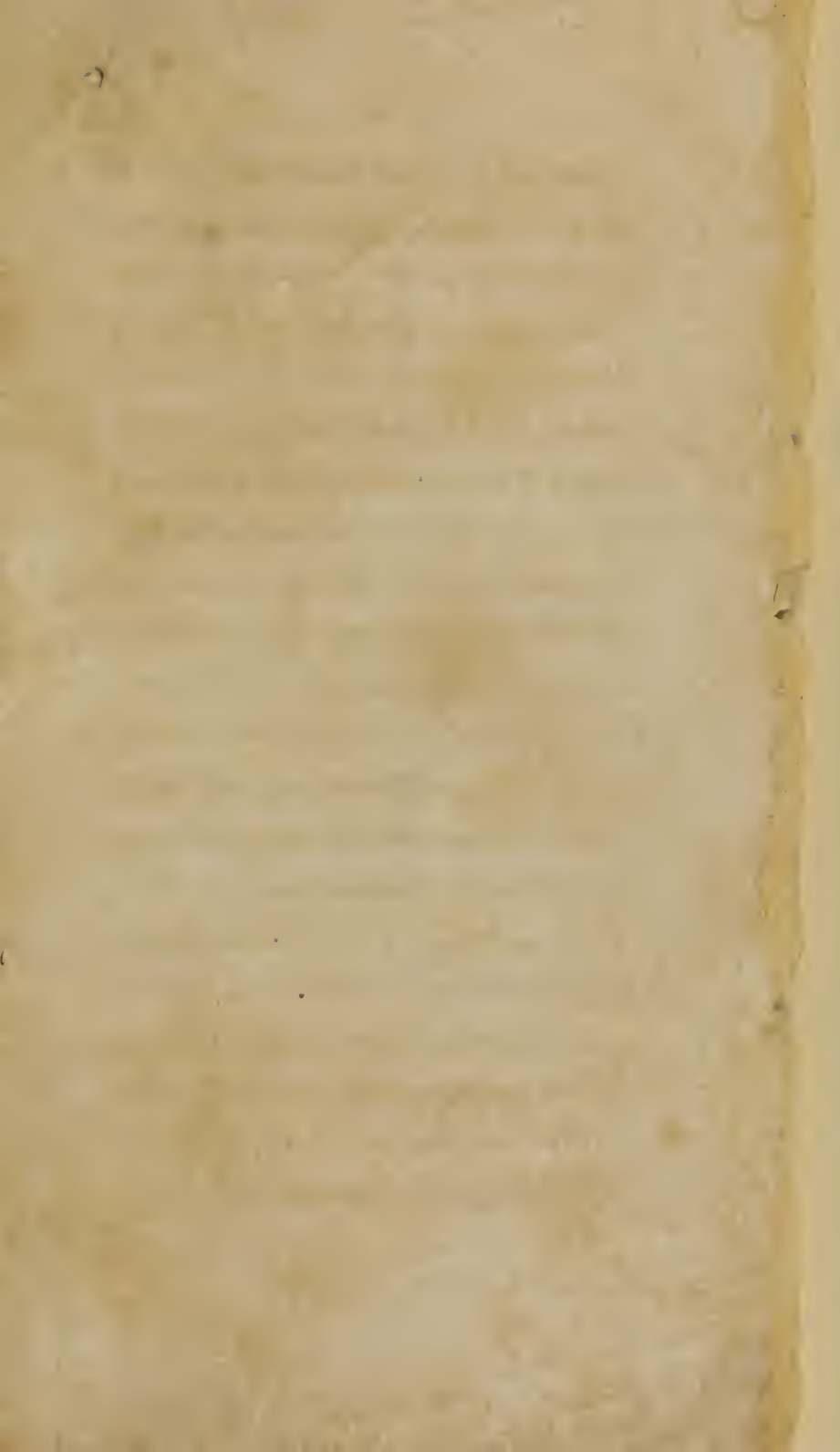
Without adverting to the evil, which the community suffers from bad practitioners, although it is even doubted by some, whether physic has been a blessing or a curse ; yet who is there, ignorant of consequences, that would wish to be responsible for the lives of his friends ? Who, that deals out poison to the sons of man, will be acquitted before God ?

What heart can withstand the shock of the parting anguish of wives, of husbands, of parents, of children ! Who can close his

eyes in sleep without being haunted with ghosts and goblins, when he has suffered a patient to languish, to die, without having afforded that relief, which the disease admitted! Poor and sorry will be this excuse; alas, it was his fate! Sad is the lot of man, indeed, if he be doomed to suffer, and to die from ignorance, when the means of information were at hand. Let him, who can, lay his hand on his breast and say, I have a conscience void of offence.

The physician should profit by all the means of improvement, which the whole world affords. Nothing can resist the impetuosity of a mind bent on greatness.

Resolve then, mount the rugged precipice to the temple of fame, adopt as a motto,
 "AUT CÆSAR AUT NULLUS."



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